

Good morning, co-chairs Senator Coleman, Representative Fox and members of the joint Judiciary committee. My name is Rochelle Palache. I am an immigrant and an organizer with the Service Employees International Union CT State Council. Thank you for this opportunity to speak.

I am here to speak on behalf of our more than 55,000 members in CT-health care workers, janitors, building services and public sector workers. We are proud of our diverse and growing membership which includes an increasing number of immigrants.

As a union founded by immigrants SEIU stands in strong support of HB 6659-The Trust Act. The Trust Act will allow state and local law enforcement officers to use their discretion in carrying out the detention policies of the secure communities federal program only in the case of individuals convicted of a serious felony. It will set one cohesive standard for all law enforcement in the state and help restore the trust that has been lost between local law enforcement and the community by providing safeguards against profiling and wrongful detention.

Immigrants have come here in pursuit of the American Dream-a safe place to live and prosper. Our members, regardless of immigration status are hard working contributing members of society, not criminals.

I would like to see our limited law enforcement resources refocused on responding to real threats to our communities, instead of being used to break up our families and racially profile our people.

SEIU believes the fight for racial justice and immigrant rights is critical to the rebuilding of our economy and essential to fostering unity and safety in our communities.

Thank you

Rochelle Palache

SEIU CT State Council